

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Look for our

Year in Review

on stands Jan. 7, 2010

THE FRONTLINE

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Serving the Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield communities • www.stewart.army.mil

Winter Special Olympics at Marne
Lanes, See Page 1C



DECEMBER 17, 2009

Smaller Army budget, same support



Col. Kevin Milton
Fort Stewart and Hunter
Army Airfield
Garrison Commander

First of all, I wish everyone who lives and works on Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield the best holiday season possible. I know that many of our Army Families miss loved ones during the holidays, and I for one will do everything possible to help you deal with this deployment.

Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield have a great reputation across the Army and have led Installation Management Command, as exemplified by our being named the Army Community of Excellence four times this decade, by doing the right thing and doing things the right way. Because of this, we have made great strides in our ability to support the units stationed here, their Soldiers and Soldiers' Families.

But, like the entire nation, the Army is feeling the effects of the economic downturn.

The Army budget for the current Fiscal Year 2010 will require all of us to find ways to do our jobs, supporting Soldiers and Families, with less money to do it. We have been given budgetary guidance that will drastically reduce the amount of dollars on hand to accomplish our ongoing support to all of us, customers and providers alike.

Funding for the Army and each installation is a fluid process and we as service providers and our customers should expect change. Some services we provide will be impacted. Priority of funding for this year and future years will go to services that effect Life, Health and Safety.

See **BUDGET** —
Page 2A

Santa flies in to grant miracles for Warriors



Kevin Larson, Fort Stewart Public Affairs

"Operation Christmas Miracle" is part of Santa's Traveling Workshop, and is in its fifth year of making national coast-to-coast flights to visit with Wounded Warriors and their Families. Lieutenant Colonel Greg Kanicki, Warrior Transition Battalion Commander, Santa, Richard Rovsek, the chairman of Santa's Traveling Workshop, and Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Dana Bowman, Santa's helper and a former Army Golden Knight, walk toward the terminal to link up with the vans for the ride to Fort Stewart's WTU.

Wreath-laying honors fallen Soldiers

Staff Sgt. Tanya Polk
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Though the weather outside was frightful, the hearts of Soldiers, Family Members, Department of the Army Civilians, and local community members were warm as 3rd Infantry Division's fallen heroes

at Warriors Walk were remembered once more before the holiday season.

"It's been described to me today that the rain is but tears of angels," said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips, 3rd ID deputy commanding general-rear, who spoke to the Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield community dur-

ing the installation's third annual wreath laying ceremony at Cottrell Field, Dec. 12.

The general said that the ceremony, known as Wreaths for Warriors Walk, was held to honor 421 Dog Face Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice and died while defending our nation's freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Holiday wreaths were placed at the base of Eastern Redbud trees, each one planted to serve as a living memorial for each of the fallen Soldiers.

The ceremony, which began with a moment of silence, coincided with Arlington National Cemetery's annual wreath laying.

See **WREATHS**

Page 3A

Raiders case Colors, ready for mission

Spc. Jared S. Eastman
1st HBCT Public Affairs

First Heavy Brigade Combat Team held their Color casing ceremony at Marne Garden, Dec. 11. The ceremony marks the start of deployment for the brigade and the Colors won't be uncased until the brigade is in Iraq.

"(The National Training Center) was tough, but it prepared us," said Col. Roger Cloutier, 1st HBCT commander. "The unit is ready. We have a lot of combat experience in the brigade, and I think the community will be proud of their sons and daughters here. They've worked hard, they're ready, and we will accomplish the mission."

See **COLORS** — Page 11A



Spc. Jared S. Eastman

First Heavy Brigade Combat Team Command Sergeant Major Edd Watson and Col. Roger Cloutier, 1st HBCT commander, roll up the brigade Colors at Marne Gardens, Dec. 11.



Deadline approaching...

Be sure to make your donations
to CFC by Dec. 30

See Page 2A for current total

**Friday: Last day to mail
packages in time for Holidays**
See Page 7A

**Marne CG and CSM
share holiday message**
See Page 2A

**Stewart-Hunter
receive Trees
for Troops**
See Page 1B



Marne CG and CSM Holiday Message



To the Fort Stewart, Hunter Army Airfield and Kelley Hill Communities:

Happy Holidays from all our deployed locations! We might be writing this tonight from Contingency Operating Base Speicher in Northern Iraq, but I know CSM Andrews and I speak for ALL deployed Dogface Soldiers – from Iraq’s western border with Syria all the way to Afghanistan’s eastern border with Pakistan – when we tell you we miss you and think of you every day. Oh, there might be the

chance for an e-mail or a phone call or even a video call now and then, but there is simply no substitute for “home” and everything and everyone that comes with it. And home is where we’d like to be. Though we are far away from the places and faces we love so much, we’re doing what American Soldiers have done in similar circumstances during holiday seasons for the last 234 years: when we miss home, we turn to each other for strength – our battle buddies and our units – because we’re all in this together. And we hope our Families turn to one another – other Army Families – for strength because our Families are all in this together, too. But there is something else about life out here you ought to know: the deep longing to be with our loved ones is mixed with an intense pride in who we are and what we do. You see, when we look at what war and inhuman cruelty has done to the people we are trying to protect in both Iraq and Afghanistan, we are more determined to make a difference. And when we fight to bring good people the same simple freedoms we enjoy in the United States and allow young democracies to take shape, we appreci-

ate so much more what we have at home and feel a great sense of pride that we voluntarily chose to serve our Nation and do our duty, this duty, at this moment in history. And all of that makes us even more thankful this time of year to be who we are – American Soldiers – Dogface Soldiers! – because while others can wish and hope for peace this holiday season...we deliver it. So the Command Sergeant Major and I will close with the Dogface Soldiers’ Holiday Wish: “Peace on earth to people of good will...all others must deal with us.”

Happy Holidays, everyone!
Rock of the Marne!

Command Sergeant Major Jesse Andrews
3rd Infantry Division/Multi-National Division-North

Major General Tony Cucolo
3rd Infantry Division/Multi-National Division-North



From the CSMs Desk: Stay safe over the holidays, don't drink and drive

Command Sgt. Maj. James Ervin
Garrison Command Sergeant Major

Christmas and the New Year are right around the corner – and again, the commander and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. However, the ball is in your court. I was looking over some statistics showing the number of Families, lives and careers that have been affected by persons determined to have a good time over the holidays without regard to their safety or the safety of others. These people were caught being disdainful of the law during a period of obvious increases in check points, and vigilance on the part of all law enforcers. The violators took their chances and paid the price. Again, this holiday season, our law enforcers are out looking for violators and are being very aggressive about it. So the message is simple – **Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.** The goal is to get impaired drivers off of the roads and keep them off. The commander and I are in

total support of this effort. Not only is your career at stake when you are caught driving under the influence – notice I didn’t say “if you are caught” – your life could be at stake as well. Just so you could get a flavor of what to expect when you have an accident while DUI, I encourage each and every one of you to watch “**Enduring Regret**” on Marne Television. This program is airing through Dec. 31 at 1 a.m., 9 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. daily on cable television channel 16 at Fort Stewart and channel 7 at Hunter Army Airfield. Just to prepare you, “Enduring Regret” is the incarceration story of Chris Sandy and how his life changed forever when he made the terrible choice to drive his car after he had been drinking. His poor decision cost two innocent lives and caused immeasurable pain for Families who lost loved ones. The consequences of Chris Sandy’s bad choice will last forever and



the pain will never go away. He is serving a 30-year sentence and sharing his story of “Enduring Regret.” Don’t miss this powerful film – make it a Family affair. Ensure your teenagers who are driving or will be driving soon are on hand to watch this firsthand account of living life after causing death. Meanwhile, give your Family and friends the following advice and be sure you yourself take heed:

- If you are planning to drink alcohol with friends, designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit, call a sober friend or Family Member, or use your community’s Sober Rides program.
- Wear your seat belt while in a car or use a helmet and protective gear when on a motorcycle as these are your best defenses against an impaired driver.
- If all else fails, use one of the many

programs developed to ensure we all make it through the holiday season. One such program is the “Tow to Go” program. This program is designed to protect both the intoxicated driver and the motoring public from avoidable car crashes. The program will operate on New Year’s Day weekend and it’s free. If you become intoxicated, buzzed or just a bit too happy, call 800-AAA-HELP. The call will be directed to a call center that will send an AAA tow truck to take you and your vehicle safely home. If you are still not convinced, go visit “That Guy” at www.thatguy.com – you won’t regret the visit. Introduce the site to Family and friends. As well as being informative and encouraging, the site is entertaining. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver’s license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses from attorney fees, other fines and court costs, towing and repairs, lost time at work, etc. So let’s all be safe and insist on doing the right thing. **Don’t drive drunk!**

BUDGET from Page 1A

While priority services will not be curtailed, that doesn’t mean conditions will always remain the same. For example, installation security measures will remain intact, but Soldiers, Family Members, Army Civilians, retirees and others might experience a slightly longer delay when entering the installation or have to stay in line a little longer for issuance of an ID card. The IMCOM commander, Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, has a commentary on page 4A of this edition of the Frontline that I want to draw to your attention. In it, he asks all of us – Soldier, Family Member, Army Civilian, and contractor – to make a difference. The Army Family Covenant remains a priority across the Army and here at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield. The Army has been strong in its commitment to the Army Family Covenant and remains so, despite funding challenges. That does not mean, however, that some change will not be

necessary as programs simply aren’t funded to previous levels. As with security measures, customers could experience some change in hours or service levels, but not in our commitment to make the covenant a continued reality. Programs that prepare Soldiers and Families for deployment will be funded as a priority. Specifically, training and deployment support will not change. Families should expect youth services and child development programs to continue and basically remain unchanged. There are currently no plans for any employees to lose their jobs by furlough or reduction in force actions. There are currently no actions planned that will affect civilian pay. Support to contracts will continue, but when contracts come up for review, some will be modified as to the scope of work. IMCOM is projected to have reduced funding

levels this year and in the foreseeable future, which will require us to prioritize some services we provide. Our goal is to continue to provide the quality of life our Soldiers and Families richly deserve, despite reduced funding. Throughout IMCOM, enterprising ways to better manage our resources will be sought out to offset in any way possible the reduced levels of spending we expect. We will look throughout the installation, both Stewart and Hunter, for ways to better manage delivering services to our customers. I’m making my New Year’s wish early this year, and it is this: I’m asking every Soldier, Army Civilian, contractor, Family Member and retiree to be understanding during this challenging time and to do your part in helping us work through this together. Again, happy holidays for all.

CFC Campaign deadline extended

With a current total of \$238,288 deadline for donations is now Dec. 30

The Frontline Staff

The 2009 Combined Federal Campaign for Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield has been extended. Rather than ending Dec. 15, the last day for Soldiers and Army Civilians to contribute to CFC is now Dec. 30. According to Chris Goss, Stewart-Hunter CFC coordinator with the Directorate of Human Resources, all unit representatives or key workers have been informed to continue collecting CFC contributions

until Dec. 30. During last year’s CFC campaign, Stewart-Hunter Soldiers and federal employees in the Coastal Empire contributed \$732,000, according to Air Force Col. (Ret.) Edward Wexler, CFC director for United Way of the Coastal Empire. Wexler said this year’s total goal for CFC contributions for this area is \$635,000. The goal for Stewart-Hunter is \$400,000, but as of Dec. 15, the community was still short of reaching that goal. Anyone interested in making a contribution to CFC should contact his or her unit or agency representative.

\$400,000

\$380,000
\$360,000
\$340,000
\$320,000
\$300,000
\$280,000
\$260,000
\$240,000
\$220,000
\$200,000
\$180,000
\$160,000
\$140,000
\$120,000
\$100,000
\$80,000
\$60,000
\$40,000
\$20,000
\$0



GOAL:
\$400,000

CURRENT:
\$238,288
(AS OF NOV. 27)

Deadline is
Dec. 30 for
donations!

BEHIND THE LENS



Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Polk

A wreath was placed at the base of 421 Eastern Redbud trees that honor fallen 3rd ID Soldiers at Warriors Walk, Fort Stewart's living memorial.



Denise Etheridge

Selia Tumanuvao, widow of Sgt. Lui Tumanuvao, reminisces about her late husband, who was killed while serving in Iraq.



Soldiers and Family Members bow their heads in prayer and reflect on the fallen 3rd ID Soldiers at Fort Stewart's Wreaths for Warriors Walk ceremony, Dec. 12.

Angela Suzch, wife of the late Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Suzch, places a wreath at the base of her husband's memorial at Fort Stewart's Warriors Walk, Dec. 12. She was one of 80 Family Members who joined Soldiers, friends and community members to the third annual Wreaths for Warriors Walk ceremony.



Brigadier General Jeffrey Phillips, 3rd ID deputy commanding general-rear, speaks to Soldiers, Family Members, Army Civilians and local community members who supported the third annual Wreaths for Warriors Walk ceremony, as Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Ashmen, 3rd ID command sergeant major-rear, looks on, Dec. 12.

WREATHS from Page 1A

Anthony Justi, member of the Directorate of Information Management who attended the national event, organized and localized the Stewart-Hunter ceremony in 2007 with co-worker Bruce Muncher. Other volunteers including Susan Ammons, secretary; and Jackie Fornshell, treasurer; Vietnam Veterans of America; Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps; Boy and Girl Scouts, Association of the United States Army; and local veteran motorcycle groups make up the nonprofit organization that keeps Wreaths for Warriors Walk alive.

"By incorporating all of these volunteers into the ceremony, we have our past and our future working together to make the ceremony a success," said Muncher, Wreaths for Warriors Walk vice president. "We started this ceremony and will continue to host it for future years to honor these Soldiers who have died defending our country. We invite all Family Members (of the fallen) to attend, and they are the guests of honor. We want to show them that they and their loved ones will never be forgotten."

This year, 80 Family Members visited

Stewart's hallowed grounds to place the floral tributes beside their Soldiers' tree. Muncher said that the ceremony also provided a venue for these Family Members to meet and draw strength from others who can relate to their loss.

"After the ceremony, we take a picture of the wreaths lined up along Warriors Walk and have a post card made of the perfect picture to send to all Family Members that we have a valid address for," he said.

Muncher added that five of the seven ceremonial wreaths are presented to Stewart-Hunter's surrounding cities; the other two are placed at the installation's Desert Storm and Vietnam memorials.

Warriors Walk became an official Army memorial this year. It's most recent tribute was Nov. 19, when the installation held a Tree Dedication Ceremony in honor of Staff Sgt. Christopher Rudzinski, member of the 293rd Military Police Company, 385th MP Battalion. Staff Sergeant Rudzinski died Oct. 16 from wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan.



IMCOM CG:

Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
IMCOM Commander

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In recent years, the Army and its Installations have enjoyed unprecedented levels of funding. In fiscal year 2008, the Army hit a high water mark in its fiscal history with a total annual budget exceeding \$250 billion – three times more than FY2001 funding level.

Much of this growth is attributed to funding the war, rebalancing our Army through investments in Army’s force structure, equipment, infrastructure, and key Soldier and Family programs.

Funding levels of this magnitude are unsustainable year after year, and as the country faces some stiff economic challenges, we are forced to reduce funding and exact a greater level of stewardship over our resources.

The Installation Management Command – like other commands throughout our Army – will operate at reduced funding levels. This means that starting in 2010, performance levels for

some installation services will be notably less than what we have had in recent years and will remain at that level for the foreseeable future.

Our challenge is to ensure those key, higher priority programs across our installations do not suffer. We will maintain our full support to Life, Health and Safety programs, the Army Family Covenant and those services that prepare our Soldier and their Families for deployment in support of the Army’s Force Generation model.

These are non-negotiables that will remain fully funded. This is our commitment; we will not depart from it. However, there will be other installation services that will clearly be reduced.

We have grown accustomed to some very high levels of service across the board in recent years and we all need to be forthcoming with the expectation that things will be different in some areas. Help manage this expectation across



your garrisons. Educate everyone as to which changes they can expect to see. A simple explanation can go a long way to helping understand the changes some of our installation services will undergo.

Across the Army’s installations, we can do much to help ourselves by becoming better stewards of our resources. It starts with the individual; everybody has a role. Simple things like turning the lights off, powering down your computer at night, driving tactical vehicles instead of TMP vehicles or conducting a VTC instead of traveling to a distant site unnecessarily all save money – and no savings is too small to forego.

Commanders and leaders across the installation have a key role and are responsible for the efficient use of our resources. Costs should be an inherent consideration in your every decision. We too often marginalize this key factor in

making good, resource-informed decisions but we can no longer afford to do so.

As I travel throughout the Army community, I carry the message that we can do business smarter and more efficiently without sacrificing the quality of service that our Soldiers and their Families so richly deserve.

I challenge everyone to do the same; to work together to ensure that those key installation programs that mean so much are well resourced and operated; that we do away with wasteful and unnecessary spending.

Every person – whether you are a Soldier, Family Member, one of our great Army Civilians or a contractor serving our Army – is needed and can make a difference.

Ask yourself if you are doing the right things and then, are you doing them right. Doing things right means doing them in the most cost efficient way without sacrificing effectiveness.

Army Strong!

BARRACK'S LIFE: Spc. Spoiled expects white Christmas

Commentary by Spc. Monica K. Smith
3rd CAB Public Affairs

As many of my “faithful readers” know, I grew up in hot, sunny Texas (Go Longhorns!). My Christmases were generally anything other than white – in fact I vividly recall playing football on Christmas day in my sofee cotton shorts and a T-shirt from some high school social event. Very “un-wintery.” I attended college in Texas and then joined the Army where my first duty station was here with the 3rd Infantry Division and Savannah Ga., which also doesn't lend itself to white Christmases. My last Christmas was spent in Iraq – and though we did have snow (the first in something like 100 years) it still wasn't what I'd call a “white Christmas.”

I don't think I'll have that problem this holiday season. The 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, where I belong, is spending a year away from the mother Marne by spreading its wings over Afghanistan while the rest of the 3rd ID returns to fin-

ish the fight in Iraq. I'm expecting snow – and a lot of it.

My problem this year isn't the lack of a winter wonderland but the lack of Christmas cheer. It's too easy for deployed Soldiers to concentrate on themselves during the holiday seasons, putting upon themselves an attitude of “there is nothing to be happy about.” But the holiday season should never be about what you can get. The season for giving does not mean that others give to you and you simply take, take, take.

A bad attitude is infectious, so why do you want to work in an office full of people with bad attitudes? Everyone is going through something and there is always someone who has had it, or is going through something worse than you. Yes, we miss home; yes, we have a hard job with long hours; yes, we have sick Family Members; yes, we have



financial problems; yes, “war is hell,” but so is life if you don't make the best with what you have.

A good attitude is also infectious – use it like a weapon, and if it doesn't work, at least you are the better person for having the right outlook on life, plus you'll still be happy. Either way, you win. Being a scrooge isn't going to make

life better, you're just going to make other people miserable. Don't be “that guy” (or girl).

So here's my challenge to my fellow Dog Face Soldiers deployed either here with me in Afghanistan or in Iraq, or those back at home. This season, let's try to focus on others. Leaders, instead of saying “bah humbug” or otherwise attempting to quench the holiday spirit in others, try getting to know your Soldiers and place their needs above your own (where have I heard that

before?... hmmm). There are many Soldiers who are spending their first holidays away from home and are also on their first deployment who may need some encouragement.

Or junior Soldiers (both enlisted and officer alike) why not practice selfless service – doing small things to help others and at the expense of yourself and the full benefit of someone else.

The 3rd CAB public affairs office is unashamedly decorated in Christmas colors (with a hint of pink sparkle of course). The sounds of a piano playing Christmas tunes with jazzy rhythms hang in the air and an array of chocolates sit waiting to be enjoyed by anyone who comes into the office. There are presents under the a pre-lighted pink-feather tree for various people in my company and an endless supply of seasonal holiday decorations to take for those who would like to change the atmosphere in their workplace.

I know I'll be having a holly jolly Christmas – snow or no snow.

Don't drink & drive: Tow to Go



"Tow to Go" is a partnership between AAA Auto Club South & Budweiser. It is FREE and open to all, and is 100% confidential.

Call 1•800•AAA•HELP. The call will be directed to an ERS Call Center The AAA tow truck takes the vehicle and the driver safely home. Tickets are not required to participate in program.

Purpose: This program is designed to protect both the intoxicated driver and the motoring public from avoidable car crashes.

Coverage Areas: Tow to Go program is available throughout Florida and in Metro Atlanta, Savannah, and Metro Nashville now through New Year's Day Weekend, 2009 Tow to Go Holiday Schedule.

Since its inception in 1998, “Tow to Go” has safely removed more than 8,600 drunk drivers from the roads and is celebrating its 10-year anniversary.

Sponsored by the Installation Safety Office, 767-7880

Marne Voices Speak Out

What is your holiday wish ?

“To have my dad come home early from Iraq because I miss him.”

Savannah Legg
5 years old



“To go to Mississippi to see Family and for a Nintendo DS with games.”

Casey Brown
11 years old



“For all the Soldiers to stay safe and for a PSP or something.”

Andrew Hamilton
12 years old



“A Barbie camper, a Bakery Eating Necklace and a Cupcake bakery.”

Kiara Dixon
7 years old



“To have the best Christmas ever with my Family.”

Rolando Marcos
5 years old



“For everybody everywhere to know the true meaning of Christmas.”

Kayla Cooper
10 years old



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Write a letter to the editor!

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SAFETY

Have a happy holiday season by practicing safety at all times!

Directorate of Emergency Services

During the upcoming holidays, there will be lots of traveling to Family and friends' homes, enjoying holiday feasts, decorating for the season and exchanging gifts. We hope that each of you will experience the wonders of this season and return safely at the appointed time. We would like to share some holiday safety tips to help this be a joyous occasion for you. Remember:

Don't:

- Drink and drive.
- Carry large sums of cash
- Park in unlit areas.
- Leave gifts in your vehicle where they can be seen.
- Leave Christmas trees lights on when unattended.

Do

- Wear seatbelts.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Plan ahead before trips.
- Wear proper clothing for weather.
- Use the buddy system.

Directorate of Emergency Services

The holiday season often means heavier traffic on the roads as Families hurry off to spend time with loved ones. The Traffic Management and Accident Investigations office has put together a few helpful hints to help you safely navigate your travels during your shopping:

1. Never drive in a hurry!
2. Never block your rear window with shopping bags.
3. Shopping without your children is okay; they can sometimes test your patience, cause distractions and interfere with your driving.
4. Never park too close to another vehicle. It's better to walk a few feet more than have your vehicle damaged.
5. Always remove dew and frost from your windows, as it will obstruct your view.
6. Practice the posted parking lot speed limit of 10 MPH.
7. Be wary of children running out from in between vehicles.

8. Finish cell phoning friends about your new purchases "before" you reenter the traffic lane from your parking spot.

9. Observe and obey new traffic signage as it sometimes changes during the holidays to adjust traffic problem areas.

10. Finally, if you happen to witness a traffic accident, remember your information is valuable. Notify the police if you observe an unsafe traffic related act. "He said- she said" in the middle of a parking lot can ruin your day or even worse lead to bigger problems. Always call the police if you are in a traffic accident. "Let's handle it between ourselves" rarely works out for the victim.

By driving defensively and putting in place just a few control measures, your shopping experience won't become a "Trafficmare" before Christmas. This holiday message has been brought to you from the Traffic Management and Accident Investigations Office of the Fort Stewart Police and the Directorate of Emergency Services. They may be reached at (912) 767-9595.



Ft. Stewart/Hunter Morale, Welfare & Recreation



Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities at Fort Stewart are offering a variety of activities Dec. 31 to help Soldiers and their Families celebrate the arrival of 2010.

New Year's Eve Party at Club Stewart

The fun begins at 9 p.m. Dec. 31 at Club Stewart, Bldg. 405. Advance tickets are \$20 per person and on the day of the event are \$25 per person for party favors, entertainment and balloon drop at midnight. Celebration ends at 3 a.m. A free bottle of champagne awaits the first 500 customers. Dinner and breakfast will be available for purchase. More information and details: 368-2212.

In addition, Corkan Family Recreation Area and Marne Lanes customers can plan on having fun playing miniature golf, climbing, teen activities, laser tag, roller skating and bowling. Here are some of the choices for your New Year's enjoyment:

Cypress Creek Adventure Golf, Bldg. 448

11:30 a.m.-7 p.m., \$1 per game/person all day. More info: 767-9884

Cypress Sam's Treehouse, Bldg. 449

11:30 a.m.-7 p.m., \$1.25 admission price for kids all day. More info: 767-9884

Corkan Teen Recreation Center, Bldg. 438

6-11 p.m., fun activities for Teens (ages 13-18) New Year's Eve celebration at 10 p. m. More info: 767-3781

Corkan Family Fun Center, Bldg. 449

6 p.m.-1 a.m., fun activities in laser tag, roller skating and climbing for entire Family. Matinee rates, games and prizes. New Year's Eve celebration at midnight. More info: 767-9884

Stewart Lanes Bowling Center, Bldg. 450

6 p.m.-1 a.m., fun activities for entire Family. Matinee rates, games and prizes. New Year's Eve celebration at midnight. More info: 767-4273

Marne Lanes Bowling Center, Bldg. 402

6 p.m. to midnight, a fun-filled New Year's Eve Bowl. Special games planned throughout the evening and prizes will be awarded. Cost \$2 per game and \$1.75 shoe rental. More info: 767-4866

(Please note: New Year's Day operating hours will be posted at each Corkan Family Recreation Area facility.)

Renovated Lotts Island: A great 'stay-cation'

Nancy Gould

Hunter Army Airfield Public Affairs

Family Members no longer need to get motel rooms near Hunter Army Airfield to spend time with their Soldiers before and after deployments. For a minimal fee, they can now camp in luxury at the renovated Lott's Island Campground, located on Hunter Army Airfield.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the \$750,000 campground on Dec. 11, marking the grand opening of the facility for servicemembers, Family Members, retirees and Department of Defense Civilians. The campground featured two new campers set up at the campground, showcasing their features to those who attended, along with a camp style meal of pulled pork and trimmings.

"This campground is another milestone that enhances the lives of Soldiers and Family Members," said Col. Kevin Milton, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield garrison commander, referring to renovations recently completed at Hallstrom Lake and Hunter Lanes. "As the second of three Christmas presents, it reaffirms the Army's commitment to Soldiers and their Families."

According to Lt. Col. Jose Aguilar, Hunter garrison commander, it's also

another accomplishment that improves services to the south side of Hunter.

Phase I of the campground, the most recent renovation, includes 16 new campsites, each with water, sewage, 30 and 50 amp electricity hook ups and cable television and wireless hook ups. Each site has a barbeque grill, fire pit and picnic table. Phase II will include 12 additional sites, along with a bathhouse with shower and laundry facilities.

"We've been requesting this renovation for about ten years," said Lee Collins, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Outdoor Recreation director, adding that there have been many obstacles in making it a reality.

Collins said that he's relieved that the facility is completed and believes it will offer Family Members a fun, inexpensive and convenient alternative to staying in town. He said the campsites are now available on a first-come, first-serve basis, but reservations will be required beginning March 2010.

"We're allowing ourselves a little time to get all the kinks out," Collins said.

Also available from Outdoor Recreation are six new pull campers and four new pop-up campers, according to Collins. Pop-up campers start at \$50 per day and sleep four to six people; six-person camp-



Kaytrina Curtis

Left to right: Lt. Col. Jose Aguilar, Hunter Army Airfield garrison commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Adkins, Hunter Army Airfield command sergeant major; Lee Collins, FMWR Outdoor Recreation director; Doreen Vandal, spouse of Brig. Gen. Tom Vandal, deputy commanding general-support; Col. Kevin Milton, Stewart-Hunter garrison commander; and Master Sgt. Vondell Brown, acting Fort Stewart command sergeant major; cut the ribbon at the Lott's Island grand opening, Dec. 11.

ers rent for \$65 per day, and a 19-foot coachman travel camper that sleeps eight, rents for \$85 per day.

For more information about campsite and camping equipment rentals, contact Collins at 315-9554.

Hallstrom Lake gets \$750K renovation, reopens for Family fun

Kaytrina Curtis

Hunter Army Airfield Public Affairs

To take a peaceful, serene skim across the lake in a boat or canoe, surrounded by mature oak trees is a dream for most but something some residents in and around the Hunter Army Airfield community can do whenever they like.

Over the past year, Hallstrom Lake has undergone a facelift and Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield servicemembers, Family Members, Army Civilians and retirees gathered at Hunter to witness the ribbon cutting ceremony that re-opened the waterfront facility, Dec. 10.

The 4.3 acre lake, which is located on the south side of post, attracts hundreds in the community to participate in the bi-annual fishing derbies. In the past, the lake was stocked with more than 2,000 pounds of catfish by the

Directorate of Public Works. Many in the community look forward to these events.

"There are many times when your spouse is deployed, and you don't know where all that equipment is located," said Family Member Janine Stidley. "But having the equipment here, I checked it out right here on site, and once my children caught the fish, I could take it over to the cleaning station."

Stidley said that her children loved the fishing derby experience.

The \$750,000 upgrade to the lake includes two playground areas, restroom facilities, lights, ceiling fans, a large, screened in covered picnic pavilion that seats 190 people and three smaller pavilions that seat 40. Inside each of the four pavilions are tables designed for wheelchair accessibility.

According to 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade Family Member Patti Galli, she

and others in the community look forward to using the lake amenities in the future.

"We have started a new walk to Iraq and Afghanistan fitness program," said Galli. "I think that it will be neat for us to meet here and walk around the lake in this beautiful natural setting."

Outdoor Recreation on Hunter offers paddle boats and canoes for rent year-round. New additions to the lake include restrooms, a floating dock, two playgrounds, paved parking and walking paths.

The upkeep of the lake will be taken care of by the Hunter Youth Ministries teen members. They will be responsible for picking up debris and report any improprieties they may witness at the lake.

"If you give teenagers responsibility, they grow up in the proper direction and proper manner," said Charles Archer, Hunter's director of religious

education. "Start them off small, but one day they are going to have to take our places, and this is the best time to teach them."

Adjacent to the housing areas on the south side of post is the new AAFES gas kiosk, Lotts Island RV Campground and slated to open soon is the child development center and a modular CDC, as well as 98 new homes.

"For the new Families who will come to the area, it will definitely make Savannah and Hunter the post of choice," said Stidley. "I think that giving the Families the opportunities to do things right here in their own home place is really good."

The facility is one more aspect added to the installation to ensure that Stewart-Hunter is a great place to live, work and train. The lake helps to provide the highest quality of life for servicemembers, Families, Army Civilians and retirees.

Weekend dining facility hours posted
The Fort Stewart weekend dining facility for Dec. 19-20 is Raider Dining Facility, building 642. Fort Stewart dining facility weekend serving hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for brunch, and 3:30-5:30 p.m. for supper.
The Hunter Army Airfield weekend dining facility for Dec. 19 - 20 is the 1/75 Ranger Dining Facility, building 110. Hunter Army Airfield dining facility weekend serving hours are 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for brunch, and 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. for supper.
The Warrior Transition Battalion Dining Facility, building 12902 in the National Guard training area, weekend serving hours are breakfast, 8-9:30 a.m.; lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and dinner, 5-6:30 p.m.

Searches part of new gate security
Fort Stewart's and Hunter Army Airfield's Random Anti-terrorism Measure Program is in place, which means randomly-selected vehicles will be searched at Access Control Points (gates) when entering or exiting the Installations. All passengers over the age of 15 are now subject to search with handheld electronic devices.

Procedures for gate pass
Individuals seeking an Installation pass must have a valid driver's license, valid insurance, valid registration and a rental agreement if applicable.
Installation passes can be picked up at Gate 1 or 5 for Fort Stewart; or at Montgomery or Wilson Gates at Hunter Army Airfield. The gates are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Employees can donate leave
Under provisions of the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, DoD Civilian employees can donate leave to approved recipients. Employees interested in donating annual leave to an approved leave recipient should submit an OPM Form 630-A to the CPAC.
For more information, contact Tina Askew at 767-8358.

STEWART

Harmon Gate closed
Beginning 10 p.m. today through 3 a.m. on Friday, the Harmon Avenue Access Control Point (Gate #3) will be closed. Subject closure is necessary to install the net for the Automated Vehicle Barrier at this gate.
Detour signs and traffic control devices will be displayed and posted for the closure duration. Motorists are encouraged to avoid this area during

subject closure. POC regarding additional information relative to the above is Alan Trowhill, Corps of Engineers, at 767-3287.

Bridges closed for repair
Bridges 3 and 4 (vicinity MR 381290) will be closed for repair. This repair will close Fort Stewart Road 40 (tank trail) from north of the intersection with FS 38 vicinity of the Rail Marshaling Area to Georgia Highway 144 West. This closure will last until March 3, 2010, or until repairs are completed.

Newman parking lot closures
Newman Fitness Center has begun parking lot renovation. Motorists are encouraged to be alert to changes in parking. Construction will be in two phases to accommodate parking and access to building. For more information, call Teddy Kelley at 767-0226.

East 7th Street closed
East 7th St., between French Rd. and Niles Ave., is closed due to the construction of the new Soldier Family Assistance Center.
Detour signs and traffic control devices will be displayed for the duration of the construction. Motorists are encouraged to avoid this area to minimize traffic congestion and to be alert to changes in traffic patterns around the area. Call 228-7451 for more information.

Bryan Village gas kiosk now open 24/7
The Bryan Village Gas Station now offers fueling 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
For more information, contact Dottie Robinson-Tramuel, branch store manager, at 368-2237.

Gingerbread Project slated for Hays Library
Look for this Special Gingerbread House project at George P. Hays Library, building 411, in partnership with Child, Youth and School Services EDGE Program from 4:30-5:30 p.m. today. Your children will hear stories about gingerbread and construct a gingerbread house. Remember that parents need to enroll youth at CYSS Central Registration at 767-2312. Space is limited, so register early. For more information, call 767-1341

West Memorial Drive closed
The East-bound lane of West Memorial Drive in Hinesville will be closed to all traffic from General Stewart Way to Welborn Street for roadway construction. The West-bound lane will be open to local traffic, all businesses and properties will remain accessible during construction.

Commercial ticket office closure

The Carlson Wagonlit commercial ticket office located in the Soldier Service Center, building 253, on Fort Stewart, is now closed permanently.

All non-Defense Transportation System (DTS) Travel will be supported through the DOL, Transportation Travel Offices located in Room 2064, building 253, on Fort Stewart, and the transportation tffice, building 1228, at Hunter Army Airfield.

For travel assistance call: Fort Stewart – (912) 767-6927/6943/9188 or Hunter Army Airfield – (912) 315-5528/5021

Parking lot closure announced
The parking lot southwest of Building 636 will be partially closed until 5 p.m., Dec. 23. The closure is necessary for the installation of the chilled water lines. For more information, contact Terry Wheeler, Army Corps of Engineers, at 228-7451.

HUNTER

ID card by appointment is new rule
The Hunter Army Airfield Identification Card Facility has transitioned to a appointment system. The purpose of this transition is to increase efficiency and productivity, while drastically reducing the waiting time for our valued customers. The hours of operations will remain the same, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Walk-ins will be seen on an emergency case-by-case basis as determined by the Site Security Manager.
Appointments can be scheduled online by visiting www.stewart.army.mil, "Directorates," "DHR," "ID Cards" or via telephone at (912) 315-5726 or (912) 315-6442. Also located at the Web site is general Information on the required documentation for the issuance of an ID Cards. You may direct your questions to Walter Ellis at 315-4733 or Martha Guy at 315-6840.

CID job opportunity announced
The United States Army Criminal Investigation Command is seeking qualified candidates to become CID special agents.
The next recruitment briefing will be held at in room 1 at the Education Center at Hunter Army Airfield at 10 a.m., Friday. To apply or for more information visit www.cid.army.mil or contact your local CID office at 70 Billy Mitchell Blvd, building 100, Hunter Army Airfield, or call (912) 315-6686.

Commissary Holiday Hours of Operation

Sunday, Dec. 20: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 21: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. - NO EARLY BIRD
Tuesday, Dec. 22: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 23: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 24: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday, Dec, 25: CLOSED
Saturday, Dec. 26: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Holiday Curfew strictly enforced



Due to risk to children during the holiday season, the Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield curfew will be enforced more stringently. See your B a l f o u r - B e a t t y Resident Handbook for curfew details. For more information, contact Wayne Lee at 767-8497.

AAFES DEPLOYMENT HOURS

Hunter Burger King: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Blimpie's: Monday-Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; closed Saturday - Sunday
WTU Shoppette: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; closed on holidays, open on training holidays
Godfather's Pizza: Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; closed Saturday and Sunday
Manchu Wok: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.

to 4 p.m.; closed Saturday and Sunday
Hunter Popeye's: Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Bryan Village Shoppette: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Troop Brigade: Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Hospital Shoppette: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; closed on holidays and training holidays

Main Shoppette: Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday 9-10 a.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Hunter Gas Kiosk: Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Stewart Popeye's: Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Stewart MCSS: Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sunday
For more information, please call (912) 876-8880.

HOLIDAY MAILING DEADLINES

DESTINATION	EXPRESS	1st CLASS	PRIORITY	PAL	SAM	PARCEL POST
APO/FPO AE 090- 092	Dec. 18	Past	Past	Past		
APO/FPO AE 093	N/A	Past	Past	Past		
APO/FPO AE 094-098	Dec. 18	Past	Past	Past		
APO/FPO AE 340	Dec. 18	Past	Past	Past		
APO/FPO AE 962-966	Dec. 18	Past	Past	Past		

EMMS: Express Mail Military Service is available to selected post offices. Check with your local Post Office to determine if this service is available to your APO/FPO of address.
PAL: PAL is a service that provides air transporta-

tion for parcels on a space-available basis. It is available for Parcel Post items not exceeding 30 pounds in weight or 60 inches in length and girth combined. The applicable PAL fee must be paid in addition to the regular surface rate of postage for each addressed piece sent by PAL service.

SAM: SAM parcels are paid at Parcel Post postage rate of postage maximum weight and size limits of 15 pounds and 60 inches in length and girth combined. SAM parcels are first transported domestically by surface and then overseas destinations by air on a space-available basis.

The deadline for sending Parcel Post and SAM items in time for the holidays has past.

Education Matters



Education Center services resume

The Army Education Centers are now fully operational, to include civilian/military testing at Fort Stewart and Soldier computer access at both sites. The Learning Center hours at Fort Stewart are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. At Hunter, the Learning Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Call 767-8331 for additional information.

College classes open to all

The upcoming Fall II term dates both on-post and distance learning classes are listed below. Some courses are offered during the day. Classes are open to both the military and civilian communities. Please contact the college directly for course schedules and enrollment information.

Central Texas College – Jan. 11- March 5; Stewart, 767-2070; Hunter, 315-4090

Columbia College – Jan. 11- March 6; Stewart, 767-5336; Hunter, 352-8635

Embry Riddle – Jan. 11- March 14; Stewart, 767-3930; Hunter, 352-5252

Webster University – Jan. - March 4; Stewart, 767-5357; Hunter, 354-0033

Savannah Tech College – Jan. 6 - March 19; Stewart, 408-2430

Barbering, Cosmetology courses slated

A new 18 month Barbering and Cosmetology Program will begin on Jan. 6 at the Savannah Technical College Liberty campus in Hinesville. This diploma program is being offered in the evenings from 6-9 p.m., Mon-Thurs and from 8 a.m.-noon, every other Saturday. All applicants should consider applying for the HOPE Grant. For additional information, e-mail the head cosmetology instructor, Kim Cutter at kcutter@savannahtech.edu.

CDL and HAVAC offered in Hinesville

Savannah Technical College is introducing the Commercial Truck Driving certificate program to Hinesville. Also available are the Automotive and Air Conditioning/Heating programs. The next session will begin Jan. 6, either the first or second week at the Airport Road Campus. For more information, contact Kimberly Rudolph at 408-3024, Ext. 6032.

GED registration announced

Adult Literacy and GED preparation courses are offered by the Liberty County Adult Education Program. The classes (offered in either morning, afternoon or evening) will prepare you to take the GED or refresh your skills in basic education subjects. The two day registration will be in building 100 on Jan. 11 and 12. Space is limited, so the first 20 people to arrive on Jan.11 will be allowed to sign up. You must be present both days from 1-5 p.m. to complete the registration process. Certain items are necessary to register, so call 368-7322 for complete details.

ESL registration dates announced

Free classes for those wanting to improve their English skills are offered at the education center at Fort Stewart. Registration is Jan. 6, 7, 11 and 12 at 9 or 11 a.m. Class placement is determined during the one hour registration process. You must bring a government issued picture identification card. Non-U.S. citizens need proof of legal status. Beginning courses are offered 9 a.m.-noon, Tuesday and Thursday. Intermediate courses are offered 8 a.m. to noon, Monday and Wednesday, in room 227. Call Faith Pitts, ESL instructor, at 368-7322.

Online academic skills course available

The Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course is now available to all the Services, DoD Civilians, and Family Members. OASC is designed for individuals who want to build their math and verbal skills to excel in their jobs, pass their exams, advance their careers, or continue their education. The course will diagnose the individual's current level of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math abilities and teach the concepts and skills needed to increase proficiency in each of these academic areas. Active duty military and DoD Civilians must use their service's portal to access OASC. Family Members must go through Military OneSource <https://www.military-onesource.com>. Select Branch of Service, then "Tools", then "DOD," then "Online Academic Skills Course." This course is available free of charge.

Educational funding available to spouses

The Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts Program, "MyCAA" is for military spouses of active duty and activated Guard and Reserve servicemembers. This centralized, virtual program provides

counseling and funding up to \$6,000, to assist with licensure, certification or education opportunities leading to portable employment opportunities; trade programs or college degrees. You may use the school of your choice, either selecting classroom or on-line delivery. All on-post and most area schools participate. This process is all done on-line and by phone with Military One Source 1-800-342-9647. For complete details and to initiate an account, click on <https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>.

Source available for Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, Chapter 33, is a non-contributory benefit (no up-front payment required by Soldiers) for those who served on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. The Veterans Administration Web site at www.gibill.va.gov provides in-depth eligibility information and a link to the on-line application. It also includes all information and steps concerning transferability to Family Members.

Individuals currently eligible for benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty or other similar programs, can continue under their program or make the decision to transfer to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Since the choice is irrevocable, it will not be possible to switch back to the previous VA benefit program. It is recommended that you research the differences by clicking on the "More About the Post-9/11 GI Bill" bar and then selecting the benefit comparison chart link. Also try www.gibill.va.gov/CH33Estimator, which calculates the eligible tuition, fees and housing allowance for your zip code. If you have questions after exploring the Web site, call 888-442-4551.

E-mail counselor-support made available

Need to reach an Army education counselor, even while deployed? Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield education centers offer a one-stop e-mail address to help. Just contact them via e-mail at stewcounselor@conus.army.mil.

Take CLEP, DANTES exams

College Level Examination Program and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests are available on post. Call Columbia College at 767-7558 for more information and testing dates. The exams are free for military personnel. CLEP tests are \$92 and DSSTs are \$100 for non-military examinees.

Hiring freeze may affect Tax Centers

Kevin Larson
Chief, Public Communications

A hiring freeze will affect the installation's tax centers, but exactly how remains to be seen.

The Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield tax centers are run by the installation's Staff Judge Advocate's Legal Assistance Office and manned by tax preparers hired and trained by that office.

"Right now, we don't know what the effect of this freeze will be on the hiring of tax preparers," said legal assistance chief Maj. George Thames. "We are in a holding pattern until we find out whether we will be able to hire additional tax preparers."

The Stewart-Hunter tax centers are

scheduled to open Jan. 20, although the opening may be delayed based on when the hiring freeze is lifted. Training time for the tax preparers also factors into when the tax centers open because they have to be certified by the Internal Tax Service, said paralegal Bruce Anglin.

Also, once the tax centers do open, the number of tax preparers may be fewer than in years past, Thames said. If that is the case, Soldiers, Family Members and retirees coming in to have their taxes prepared at the centers should expect longer waiting times.

"People will need to be patient," he said. "Also, the more prepared you come to the meeting to have your taxes prepared, the better service we'll be able to provide you."

With the exact nature of how the hiring freeze will affect the tax center unclear, Anglin is urging those with simple tax filing issues to consider using alternate services. Alternate tax filing services are available via the Military One Source Web site at the Federal Free File link. The program can be used to file federal income tax returns electronically online. Other programs are also available, and all allow taxpayers to file state tax returns for a nominal fee, he said.

"For people doing simple returns, these services are good," Anglin said. "Those free services may not be the best place to go, though, for those with more complicated tax filing issues."

Anglin did say that the tax center will

not turn anyone away to take an initial look at tax returns. For more complicated tax needs, a drop off service may be available. How long it will take to prepare the tax return depends on how complicated the return is and the number of tax preparers hired, he said. Also, tax returns that include itemizations for things like multiple rental properties or for home businesses will be referred to an alternate tax preparation service.

For more information on the tax centers, call the Legal Assistance Center at 912-767-8809 or 912-767-7150. At Hunter Army Airfield, call 912-315-5115.

For more information, visit the Military One Source Web site at www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/FindInformation/Category/TaxFilingServices.aspx

AER earns fourth 4-Star rating

Army Emergency Relief

Army Emergency Relief recently earned its fourth consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, the nation's largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities. This coveted rating reflects AER's sound fiscal management and program efficiency in providing financial assistance.

In 2008, 91 cents of every dollar spent by AER was for the program costs involved in taking care of Soldiers and their Families.

AER is the Army's own military aid society, founded in 1942 in response to the need for Soldiers and their Families who were experiencing financial emer-

gencies in World War II. Since its founding, AER has provided over \$1.2 Billion of financial assistance. AER provides financial assistance in the form of a no-interest loans and grants for such needs as emergency travel, housing, car repair, food and utilities.

AER assistance is available to Soldiers and their Families wherever they are located and the amount of assistance approved is only limited by a valid need. Soldiers and their Family Members requiring AER assistance need only contact their chain of command or local AER office. For more information, call the AER office at 767-5065 at Fort Stewart or 315-5301 at Hunter Army Airfield.

3RD ID BAND perform live in Iraq



Our own 3rd Infantry Division Band will present a live, Web-casted Holiday Concert from Iraq, noon until 1:30 p.m., Friday. Make plans now to join in to see the 3ID Band LIVE as they perform a Holiday Concert, which will be available at:

http://dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_live_webcasts.php&which=1006.

You should be able to click on this link or copy and paste it into your Web browser.

Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System recommends that potential viewers go to DVIDS's Web site at www.dvidshub.net to view an upcoming 3ID live Web cast on the computer you will be using on Dec. 18. You may need to run updates, adjust permission settings or make some other kind of changes on your computer in order to see the streaming video. There is a daily video Web cast at 3 p.m. (EST), Monday-Friday, that can be used as a test. If you have trouble viewing the Web cast, can call the media hotline at (678) 421-6612.

LEGAL NOTICE

Anyone having any claims, or who is indebted to the estate of **1st Sgt. Michael Anderson**, of HHC, STB, 3rd Sustainment Bde, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314 should contact Capt. Anna Walls, HHC, STB, 3rd Sustainment Bde, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314 at (912) 767-5613.

Anyone having any claims, or who is indebted to the estate of **Spc. Jamie Blasingame**, of B Co., 3rd BSB, 1st HBC, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314 should contact 1st Lt. Shane McKinley, 3rd BSB, 1st HBC, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314 at (912) 220-5985.

Georgetown, Mass., gives gifts to Soldiers early

Spc. Michael Adams
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE, MAREZ, Iraq – In this season of giving, Americans often give to their friends and Family. But residents of Georgetown, Mass., decided to give to several groups of people they didn't even know.

“Those are the guys that don't get a chance to come to Contingency Operating Base Speicher,” said Col. Malcolm Burr, of Georgetown, and the red team leader for Task Force Marne. “They don't have a gymnasium, a post exchange, a dining facility like I do.”

Colonel Burr gathered lists of what kind of goods the troops wanted and told the people he was in contact with back home what they requested.

His idea, to help out some of the Soldiers who do not have the comforts of home, turned into a mission by the residents of the small New England town to help Soldiers who are far away.

When Mike Muller, a Georgetown resident, got wind of what Col. Burr wanted for the Soldiers, he decided to get the community involved. He



Spc. Michael Adams

Soldiers with the Military Transition Team, 4th Iraqi Bde., 1st Iraqi Div., thank Mike and Trishia Muller, of Georgetown, Mass., for sending them care packages through a drive they started to make Soldiers feel more at home.

decided to rent Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7608 in Georgetown on a Sunday to have people bring in goods and some donations.

Muller said he would have been happy if they were able to send 30

packages to the combat zone. The town rallied together to assemble more than 180 packages.

More than 150 Georgetown residents participated in the drive, which included packaging the goods, wrap-

ping the goods and writing letters to the troops.

The packages were distributed to troops throughout Iraq, including Uganda security personnel who guard the Division Main Headquarters. The recipients flooded Muller and the volunteers with thank you cards for giving them a little piece of home.

Muller loved that he was supporting the troops any way he could. He felt it was so successful he is planning on making it a yearly event.

While he received a lot of praise for what he did, from Soldiers and his hometown alike, he felt the praise should be for the Soldiers serving.

“We feel like the work we have done to show support pales in comparison to the sacrifices made by our Soldiers,” Muller said.

He went on to say how proud he is of his town and what they accomplished that day, and that this packaging drive would become a yearly event.

But Muller also wanted to express his support for the troops overseas during the holiday season.

“(All of us in Georgetown) wish all of our Soldiers a happy and safe holiday season. We will keep you in our thoughts,” he said.



Spc. Gaelen Lowers, 3rd Sustainment Brigade Public Affiars

3SB Soldiers celebrate holidays with Toys For Tots

Staff Sergeant Phillip Phinisee, vice president for the 3rd Infantry Division Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program, and Spc. Jeff Summer, 92nd Engineering Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, load toys into boxes for the Toys for Tots foundation in Hinesville, Ga., Dec. 14. Soldiers from the 3rd Sustainment Brigade volunteered their time to help organize toys and set up the donation location.

Rocky celebrates 373rd National Guard birthday

Task Force Marne Public Affairs Office

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Since the first state militia was formed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636, the National Guard still remains “Always Ready, Always There.”

The Task Force Marne Commander and more than 50 Department of Defense Civilians, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen—active duty and National Guardsmen—celebrated the 373rd National Guard Birthday with a cake cutting commemoration ceremony at the Task Force Headquarters, Dec 12.

“We love our country, we love our state, and we love our communities,” said Sgt. 1st Class Claudia Bullard, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Oklahoma National Guard. “I think it's a great way to serve our country.”

Gathered alongside the TF Marne mas-

cot, Rocky, the headquarters' oldest and youngest National Guard members, both with the 145th MPAD, joined the Task Force commander, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, and senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, to cut a National Guard Birthday commemoration cake.

“I'm really proud of the U.S. National Guardsmen—from all services—contribution to the defense of our nation,” said Capt. Joshua Page, 145th MPAD. “I feel the National Guard demonstrates our country's unity and dedication to the principles of freedom.”

Since the Revolutionary War, National Guardsmen have contributed to the defense of the nation and today are deployed globally during the Era of Persistent conflict.

And true to their name, 373 years later National Guardsmen continue to be “Always Ready, Always There.”



Sgt. 1st Class Kelly McCargo

Alongside Rocky, Marne Visitors Bureau Officer in Charge, Maj. Richard Ikena, helps himself to a slice of cake at Task Force Headquarters, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 12.

Community Mayors' Minute

Nicci Frederick
Community Liaison Office

It's that time of year when most of us are more concerned about giving to others. Sadly, for some the season is all about taking, and by that I mean robberies. So, I would like to encourage everyone to take something themselves – a few minutes to ensure the safety and security of your belongings.

If you are going out of town, be sure to let your neighbors know so they can keep an eye on any suspicious activity while you are gone. After all, it's the time of year for visitors, so if they see a strange car at your place and do not

know you are gone, they might assume it's a friend or relative visiting.

Do not hide keys outside your home; experienced burglars know all the good hiding places and WILL find them. Instead, leave a spare with a trusted neighbor. Place timers on some of your inside lights. Invest in a variable timer that can turn lights on and off at different times on different days to make it look like someone is home.

Hide and/or destroy all those boxes from expensive gifts you received for Christmas. Leaving them in the carport simply advertises what is inside.

Never leave a purse, wallet, laptop, MP3 player, or any other valuables on

counters, tables, car seats, or any other place where they are easily visible from a window. It will invite theft.

Remember that a great way to prevent and reduce crime is a Neighborhood Watch program. Criminals can easily spot patrolling law enforcement and avoid them, but it's much harder to avoid the vigilant eyes of a good Neighborhood Watch. Residents know their neighborhoods and are in the best position to identify suspicious activity, see crimes as they occur or be aware of strangers casing the area. In fact, the National Sheriffs' Association has stated that “the impact on crime prevention by law enforcement alone is minimal when com-

pared with the power of private citizens working with law enforcement and with each other.”

Fort Stewart is actively working to encourage a Neighborhood Watch start up. If you are interested in volunteering to participate in a Neighborhood Watch program in your neighborhood, please contact the Community Liaison Office at 767-9717 or email nichole.frederick1@gmail.com.

To report crimes or suspicious activity, call 911 or 767-4895 at Fort Stewart or 315-6133 at Hunter Army Airfield. Be sure to note as much information as possible to describe any persons and/or vehicles.

Ceremony allows couples to share precious moments

Spc. Jared S. Eastman
1st HBCT Public Affairs

The Fort Stewart main post chapel is quiet the evening of Dec. 11. Inside, about 120 couples are writing down their vows on a piece of paper for the coin and covenant ceremony, where Soldiers and their spouses renew their vows and each receives half of a coin on a necklace.

“The coin is a symbolic necklace that symbolizes that God will watch over the couple, not just physically, but also in the sense that it will strengthen their relationship even in the midst of physical separation,” said Chaplain (Maj.) Barton Herndon, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team chaplain.

The event wasn’t just to renew vows but also for Soldiers to take time out of their busy deployment schedules to recommit to their spouses.

“Time now is precious,” said Col. Roger Cloutier, 1st HBCT commander. “We spend a tremendous amount of time getting ready to do our mission, but we don’t spend a lot of time stopping and thinking about our commitment to our spouse. None of us know what tomorrow will bring, so I think it’s very important that before we walk out the door, we take our spouse by the hand, look into their eyes, and renew our wedding vows.”

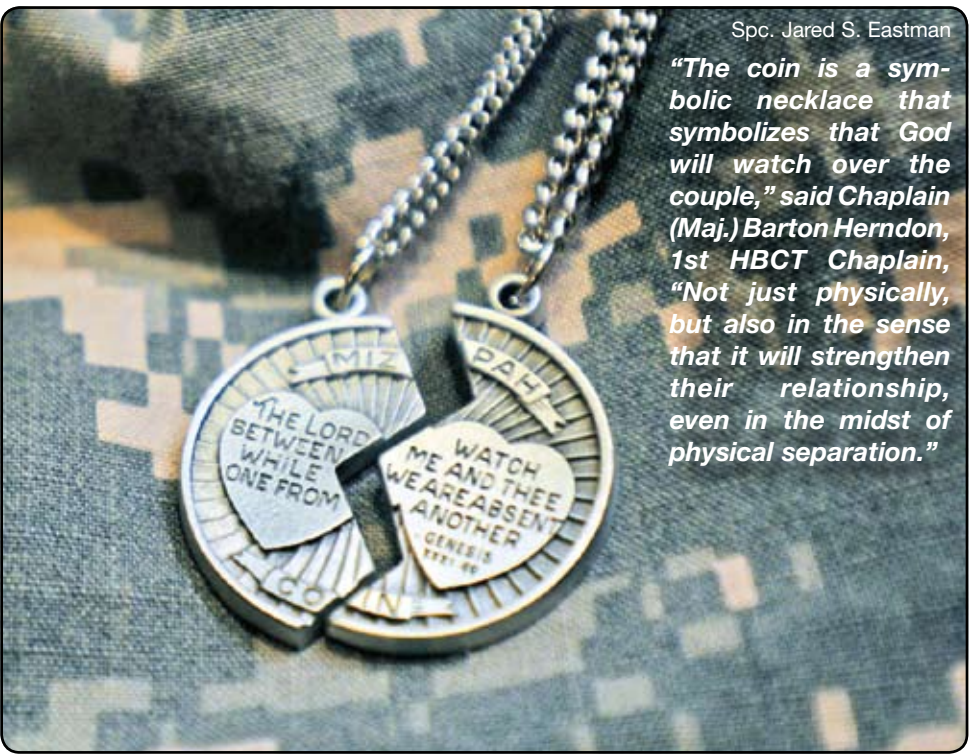
Some Soldiers at the event were hours away from deploying. “Right now, people are taking time out of their schedules,” said Sgt. Antonio Henderson, 1st HBCT chaplain’s assistant. “Even though some are within a few hours or a few days of going to Iraq, and they’re dedicating these moments to their spouse. The importance of a coin and covenant ceremony is to allow the couples to renew their vows, make promises to one another, and it allows those couples to each get a part of a coin to give them something to strengthen them.”

The event could not have gone so well without the help of the chaplain’s assistants who ran everything from behind the scenes.

“We started at around 12 p.m., and my chaplain’s assistants and myself put about 300 chairs out, moved about 60 tables, and got all the food together,” said Sgt. Henderson. “We’ve been planning for this since we got back from the National Training Center.”

For the couples, the event was more than just an opportunity to renew their vows; it was a chance to think about what those vows mean now that they’ve spent more time together.

“It’s the same vows,” said Capt. Angela Sands, 1-3 BSTB Rear Detachment Commander. “But it means a bit more because we know



Spc. Jared S. Eastman
“The coin is a symbolic necklace that symbolizes that God will watch over the couple,” said Chaplain (Maj.) Barton Herndon, 1st HBCT Chaplain, “Not just physically, but also in the sense that it will strengthen their relationship, even in the midst of physical separation.”

each other better so we know what we are getting into when we say those things.”

Couples who attended the event also received a daily devotional for both spouses.

“What we are doing is we are giving both the Soldier and the spouse a daily devotional called, ‘A Walk Through the Desert Together,’” said Chap. Herndon. “The rear-detachment chaplain will

coordinate with the Family Readiness Group if there is a request for a Bible study group, and he will also be attending FRG meetings. We will also be coordinating retreats for the Families. During deployments, chaplains can play a vital role in helping a Soldier. Sometimes it’s just a misunderstanding that the chaplain can come in and give a calm presence and a word of reassurance to the couple.”

1st HBCT remembers fallen Soldiers



Spc. Jared S. Eastman

Various donors to the Raider Brigade Fallen Soldiers Memorial break the ground for the memorial site outside 1st HBCT’s new headquarters building, Dec. 9.

Spc. Jared S. Eastman
1st HBCT Public Affairs

Soldiers and sponsors of the Raider Brigade Fallen Soldiers Memorial gathered together at the new brigade headquarters to break ground on the memorial site, Dec. 9. The memorial, scheduled to be dedicated when the Raider Brigade returns to Iraq, will be located next to the new brigade headquarters.

“The importance of having a memorial like this is to have a place where Soldiers and Families can go and not think about what happened to the Soldier, but the good times that they’ve had with that Family Member and with that Soldier,” said Spc. Jani Michielsen, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team. “We have the Warriors Walk, which is really nice, but we need a place that is just for 1st Brigade Soldiers alone.”

The project design, donated by Infinity Design builders, incorporates six pillars for each of the brigade’s six battalions, as well as benches and trees.

“I helped with funds for the memorial and also coordinated with the Infinity Design builders in erecting the drafting plans for the memorial itself and kept

communication with them to fine-tune the memorial into what we see today,” said Staff Sgt. Jason Smith, operations noncommissioned officer for the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment. “I asked the colonel if I could ask them to help out and Infinity Design Builders said they would be glad to do it. It’s very touching to be a part of this. Having known a couple of the fallen Soldiers myself, it helps fill the void of their loss.”

Businesses from across the Coastal Empire contributed to turn the memorial into a reality.

“This is just another example of how the community that surrounds Fort Stewart really comes together to dedicate their time and their effort to this memorial to support the Soldier,” said Command Sgt. Major Jeffrey Ashmen, division command sergeant major-rear.

The memorial will also serve as a peaceful place for Soldiers and Family Members to reflect on their lost loved ones.

“I personally knew one of the Soldiers who will be on that memorial as my commander,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Ashmen. “And to hear his name again causes you to reflect back on the person, and he truly was a great commander.”

Desert Rogues, Iraqi Army uncover large weapons cache

Spc. Dustin Gautney
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq – Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and members from 2/52 Iraqi Army Brigade discovered a large weapons cache in Ninewa province, in northern Iraq, Dec. 6.

The weapons cache of 481 projectile explosives and 211 fuses was the largest found in Ninewa province since 2003.

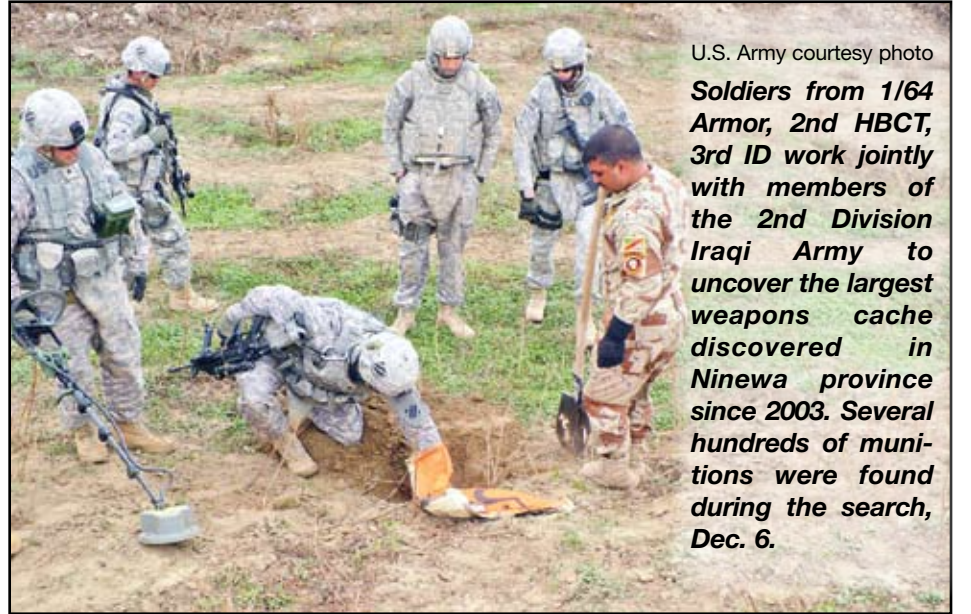
Information of a possible weapons cache was given to 2/52 IA by a local informant that the weapons cache site was still active and has been in use for the past five years.

Major Gen. Nassir, commander of 2nd IA Division, stated that the munitions that were found were destined to

kill Iraqi and American Soldiers. Based on the size of the cache, it was most likely to be used to disrupt the upcoming national elections.

“Our Soldiers finding this cache, in cooperation with the Iraqi Army, undoubtedly saved lives and made Iraq safer to live” said Lt. Col. Ross Coffman, commander, 1/64th Armor, 2nd HBCT. “That is what we’re here for.”

Upon arrival at the possible cache site, engineers from 1/64th Armor discovered the suspected site and later found a second weapons cache that was originally thought to be a water pipe. Later it was discovered that there was a series of smaller caches located in a close area. The ordnance ranged from relatively new and recently hidden rounds to rounds that had been in the ground for an undetermined length of time.



U.S. Army courtesy photo
Soldiers from 1/64 Armor, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID work jointly with members of the 2nd Division Iraqi Army to uncover the largest weapons cache discovered in Ninewa province since 2003. Several hundreds of munitions were found during the search, Dec. 6.



Staff Sgt. Tanya Polk, 4th IBCT Public Affairs

Artillerymen compete for 'Top Gun' honors

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, competed for the coveted red muzzle for their M119 Howitzer during the Patriot Battalion’s ‘Top Gun’ competition at Fort Stewart, Dec. 7-11. The competition was a part of Table VIII Gunnery, where Soldiers were evaluated on setting up and firing their recently fielded weapons. The winners of Top Gun will be awarded Friday.

COLORS

from Page 1A

For some, the Color casing ceremony marks the start of their first deployment.

“It feels like I’m joning a veteran team,” said Pfc. Jeremiah Jensen, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st HBCT. “The nice part of being a part of this team is that they know what they are doing and they know how to lead you and take care of you. It’s nice to know where I am and know I’ll be taken care of.”

“This is my fifth deployment,” said Sgt. Nathaniel Freeman, HHC, 1st HBCT. “This brigade is real close knit. They work hard, and we have really excellent leadership.”

One of the greatest assets a brigade can have is Soldiers with experience who can train new recruits in the brigade as well as teach life lessons to other veterans.

“I can’t say a whole lot

about how this combat team compares to others, but what I do know is that this brigade has done a very good job of keeping experience here as well as bringing in new and fresh experience,” said Sgt. Freeman. “I think we will be able to do what we have to do, then come home.”

However, one of the hardest jobs in the Army is being an Army spouse, according to Sgt. Freeman.

“I’m ready to go, I really want to get this done and come back home to my loved ones,” he said. “My wife is very supportive. As usual, I have the easy job. She has the hard job - being a wife, a single mother. While I’m gone, it isn’t easy, so kudos to her. All the wives do a job that Soldiers could not do.”

The brigade will uncase their Colors when they take command of their mission in Baghdad, early next year.



Spc. Jared Eastman

The companies of 1st HBCT stand at attention during the Colors casing ceremony at Marne Gardens, Dec. 11.

For more Stewart - Hunter community events check out

the December **Quality Time** now available!

Combat patch awarded to Spartan Soldiers

Pfc. Crystal M. O'Neal
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq – Spartan Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Marez in northern Iraq work seven days a week, always pushing to accomplish their mission to help assist and support the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi people.

A 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division battalion made time, however, to recognize its first-time deployers and their dedication and support to the fight, Dec. 14.

The 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, held its Battalion Patch Ceremony at FOB Marez, awarding all its first-time deployers the right to wear the 3rd ID Marne combat patch.

The patch, worn on the Soldier's right shoulder, signifies their current deployed status and their dedication to the country.

Spartan Commander, Col. Charles E. A. Sexton, spoke at the event, reminding the Soldiers' of 3rd ID's legendary dedication to the country and challenging them to be proud of and uphold the division's legacy.

"The patch you received today links you all to our history of greatness," he said. "Don't let that greatness down. I know you have it in you not to. You are now a part of something that is bigger than us individuals; you are part of an organization that has a history of honor dating back to 1917 and beyond. Remember that when you wear this patch."

After the commander spoke, he directed all 26th BSB battalion commanders, first sergeants and leaders to place the combat patch on their Soldiers' shoulder.

First Sergeant Tisa Scott, Company A, 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID said that her Soldiers were very excited about the ceremony and had been anticipating it for a long time.

"A lot of Soldiers wanted to go ahead and put the patch on as soon as we got to Iraq," said the smiling first sergeant. "You could see the excitement in their faces today, and it was truly an honor to see them get their patch. It wasn't hard to see that this moment was very special to them; it makes their commitment to the fight official."

Private First Class Joseph Anthony, A Co., 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, said that it felt great to get the combat patch.

"It really feels good; I know now that I have accomplished something great," said Pfc. Anthony. "I have been waiting since Kuwait to put it on and finally the day is here."

The private first class also said that he understood the honor behind wearing the patch.

"I am going to wear this patch with pride," he said.



Photos by Pfc. Crystal M. O'Neal

ABOVE: Captain Jonathan Fredritz, Company B, 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID commander, followed by 1st Sgt. Milton Whitaker, places a Marne combat patch on one of his Soldiers during the 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID Battalion Patch Ceremony at FOB Marez in northern Iraq, Dec. 14.



ABOVE: Captain Margie Deck, Company C, 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, salutes one her Soldiers after awarding the Soldier a Marne combat patch during the 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID Battalion Patch Ceremony held at FOB Marez in northern Iraq, Dec. 14.

LEFT: Spartan Soldiers from 26th BSB, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID stand at attention, waiting to be presented their combat patches during the 26th BSB Battalion Patch Ceremony held at FOB Marez in northern Iraq, Dec. 14.

ISF, Spartan Soldiers link for soccer ball drop

Pfc. Crystal M. O'Neal
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—A group of children huddle together, giving each other small pushes and shoves, as they try to get to the front of the crowd. Their hands stretch upward, their eyes are wide and glistening with excitement, and their smiles are covering their entire faces. One child catches a soccer ball as it is passed into the crowd.

All because 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers teamed with Iraqi Security Forces to deliver soccer balls to children in Mosul, Iraq during a soccer ball drop, Dec. 11.

Command Sergeant Major Valmond A. Martin, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID brigade command sergeant major, said visiting Mosul to hand out soccer balls to the children was a top priority on the Spartans' agenda.

"We were definitely excited to come out today; it's always good to see smiling, happy children," said Command Sgt. Maj. Martin. "Our Iraqi counterparts, the ISF, did a great job helping with security and making the event run smoothly. In Iraq, soccer is one of the most popular sports, so this is really big. A young kid with a soccer ball is the future."

To support the soccer ball drop, Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID drove light medium tactical vehicles loaded with boxes of soccer balls to the drop site.

First Lieutenant Daniel Dubov, 3/7 Cav., 2nd HBCT said that the Soldiers were glad to help with the event.

"Doing these humanitarian-aid drops show the people of Iraq that Soldiers do really care, and that we are making an honest effort to help them in every way that we are able to, said 1st. Lt. Dubov. "The children loved us; they swarmed around us, smiling and happy, ready to get one of the soccer balls."

The first lieutenant also added that the ISF's professionalism and dedication also made the event a success.

"The Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police were just great; they were extremely professional," said 1st. Lt. Dubov. "They also showed that they were well-trained, providing security and stepping in to take charge whenever needed. These guys have definitely come a long way, and their progress shows that they will only continue to get better."

Spartan Commander, Col. Charles E. Sexton, was also able to tour the city of Mosul with the city's mayor, Zuhayr Muhsin, and head sheik of tribe Ao-Arajiy, Muhson Hushim Ao-Arajiy, who both helped Spartan Soldiers hand out the soccer balls to the children.



Photos by Pfc. Crystal M. O'Neal

Spartan Commander, Col. Charles E. Sexton, passes out soccer balls during a joint soccer ball donation provided by Spartan Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces in Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 11.



Two children smile after receiving a soccer ball from 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces in Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 11.

Spartans, Iraqi Police continue building lasting relationship



Spc. Daniel Nelson

Iraqi Police stand guard as their fellow policemen salute the crowd during a Pass and Review Parade in Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 8.

Spc. Dustin Gautney
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq – The 3rd Federal Police Division held a pass and review parade at the 3rd Division Federal Police Headquarters in Western Mosul, Iraq. The event was followed by a key leader engagement between the 3rd Division Federal Division commanding general and the members of the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division, Dec. 8.

The key leader engagement and pass and review were instrumental in continuing to develop the relationship between 3rd Division Federal Police and 3rd ID.

“The event was great. The Iraqi Police’s demonstration of military discipline and manned strength showed their ability to organize as well as execute at a very high standard and made the huge task of putting on this kind of event look easy,” said Lt. Col.

Bryan Luke, deputy commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID.

Lieutenant Colonel Luke also said that the vehicles for the pass and review were beautifully decorated with flowers, streamers, and balloons.

“This was unique and different because we never decorate our vehicles, so it showed that they incorporated their culture and tradition into the event as well,” Lt. Col. Luke said.

The parade and ceremony included displays of military precision by the 3rd Division Iraqi Police force as well as featured aerial martial-arts fighting technique demonstration by the Iraqi Police Special Forces. The demonstration included martial arts expertise by breaking bricks and wooden boards.

Overseeing the pass and review was Lt. Gen. AlWadie, Commander Federal Police forces; U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Thomas Vandal, Task Force Marne deputy commander-support.

Look for our

Year in Review

on stands Jan. 7, 2010